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Anna May Wong Stars in a Silent Film

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Anna May Wong Stars in a Silent Film

All I remember is the glare
of cameras. Every mouth I've met
is a flight risk, which is to say that no one will kiss me
offscreen. Instead, I am propped
up against a slick of women.
Men like me most
this way: a duplicate, voice drowned
out by the masses. They marvel
at the comma-curve of my back, the hairlessness
of my limbs. I am best when shaved
into something digestible. I never stick
in the clutch of a throat. They insert
my face into a *Time* centerfold & joke
that this is affirmative action. The truth is I am not good enough
to play myself in films because my skin
is likened to jaundice—who could love an
affliction? I am an illness
which is to say I did this
to them—I should be quarantined. The enemy
bears a striking resemblance to me. A man says
he wants to watch me unravel in a shallow pool of rain. I know better
than to call it a tragedy—this is just Thursday.
If I could speak, I'd say *when the little match girl immolates,*
be courteous & watch.